



THORN CREEK NATURE CENTER

247 Monee Road, Park Forest
IL 60466 708-747-6320
thorn_creek@att.net

Visit our Website - tcwoods.org

*Nature Center open Friday, noon to 4 p.m.
Trails open daily year-round, sunrise to sunset*

Nature Center Closed:
Friday, November 24—Thanksgiving
Friday, December 22—Christmas
Friday, December 29—New Years

Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve is comprised of over 1000 acres of oak-hickory woodland, dotted with vernal ponds and dissected by Thorn Creek and its tributary streams. Over 3 1/2 miles of trails meander through woodland, floodplain forest, scenic ravines and pine plantations. Trails lead to marshy Owl Lake and a wetland overlook. The preserve also shelters the historic Hornicek Farm, old-field habitat and a restored Prairie Sampler.

Trail use: For individuals or for groups of less than ten, there is no charge to use the trails. Children must be with an adult. Trails are natural surface across uneven terrain.

Program registration: Most programs require registration unless otherwise noted. Call or email to register.

Nature Center building can be rented for gatherings: Call or email for information.

Group Programs: Programs for schools, youth groups, scouts, seniors, homeschoolers, and other groups are offered both at the preserve and off-site. Call or email for information about our Nature Education Programs.

THORN CREEK WOODS MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Forest Preserve District of Will County * Village of Park Forest
Friends of Thorn Creek Woods * Village of University Park

The Preserve is jointly owned by University Park, Park Forest and the Forest Preserve District of Will County. The Commission manages the Woods as a whole - a single unified dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve providing habitat for native plant and animal communities.

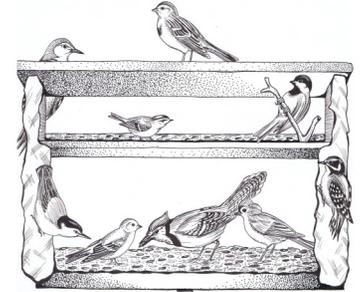
Funding for the operation of the Preserve and Nature Center comes from annual contributions by member agencies - monetary & in-kind - , program fees, grants and donations. The bare bones Commission budget has no extra money for needed nature center building and preserve improvements.

Management Commission meets third Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m.

JANUARY

LEARN YOUR BIRDS BY SPRING

Bird identification can be overwhelming but learning only a few birds each week makes it fun and easy! Six weekly lessons and short hikes given by master birder Sue Zelek on the key shapes, markings, habits and songs for our local birds will make spring bird watching a snap! Price includes a Field Guide and other birding materials. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sundays, January 14 through February 18 (6 classes). 1-3:30 p.m. Ages 11 or older. \$50 prepaid for full series. Registration and payment by Wednesday, January 8.**



TREES IN WINTER

Just like animals, trees have their own winter survival tricks. Come see Thorn Creek Woods for the trees and learn how they protect themselves from the harsh elements. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Saturday, January 20, 10:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m. All ages. Registration required by Monday, January 15: 708.747.6320.**

FEBRUARY

BIRDING BY SIGHT AND SOUND FOR KIDS

Learn simple ways to identify and observe birds, using binoculars, field guides, and bird call tapes. Learn our most common birds with fun games and crafts. The class includes a Beginner Bird Guide and other birding materials to take home. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, February 17, 1-3:30 p.m. \$10 fee. Ages 7-12. Registration by Wednesday, January 12.**



NOVEMBER continued

PRAIRIE SAMPLER AND TRAIL WORKDAY

Get down and dirty at our Thorn Creek workday. Help repair boardwalks, maintain trails, or weed and nurture our Prairie Sampler and butterfly gardens. Bring gloves, favorite tools and dress for the weather. **Saturday, November 18, 1-3 p.m. Ages 12 and older; children 15 or younger must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Monday, November 13.**



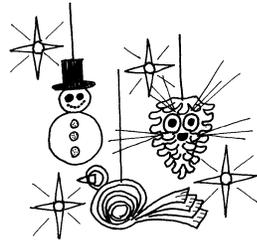
DECEMBER

WINTER SURVIVAL

Come learn about the winter survival tactics of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians that call Thorn Creek home. We will explore different types of hibernation. After the hike participants will create a pinecone creature to take home. This program is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, December 3, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. All ages. Registration required by Monday, November 27.**

HOLIDAY NATURE CRAFTS

Fun family program to create holiday decorations from natural materials. Craft twigs, seeds, pinecones and more into holiday creations to take home. All materials will be provided. **Sunday, December 10, 1-3 p.m. All Ages. \$5 per person. Registration Required by Monday, December 4.**



SEPTEMBER

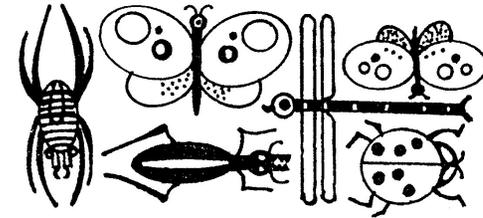
GARLIC FOR SALE—ONE DAY ONLY THORN CREEK NATURE CENTER WILL HAVE A BOOTH AT THE PARK FOREST FARMERS MARKET FOR ONE DAY

Garlic bulbs of 20 varieties, all grown at Thorn Creek's Historic Farm, will be sold for \$3 per bulb, for eating and for planting this fall. We have garlic to buy and planting information will be available. **Saturday, September 16. 7 a.m. to Noon. Park Forest Farmers Market, 152 Main Street next to Dollar General.**



OUR POLLINATORS

We'll look for pollinators such as bees, wasps, flies, moths, butterflies, beetles and thrips and observe the important job they do helping plants grow. And we'll search for the types of insects that support our bird populations. Participants take home a milkweed planting. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, September 17, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. All ages. Registration required by Monday, September 11.**



PRAIRIE SAMPLER AND TRAIL WORKDAY

Come out and have fun sprucing up the Nature Center, as well as tackling preserve cleanup, trail repairs, and weeding our Prairie Sampler. There will be indoor and outdoor work to be done. Bring a lunch and work gloves and dress for the weather. Groups and community service are welcome. **Sunday, September 24, 1-3 p.m. Ages 12 and older; children 15 or younger must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Monday, September 18.**



Calling all school, home school groups, youth groups, seniors groups and clubs!

Bring your group to explore fall colors, animal tracks, soils, aquatic insects and more. These Nature Education Programs are sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. Pre-registration and fees apply. Call or email for more information: 708-747-6320, thorn_creek@att.net



OCTOBER

BUTTERFLIES OF THE AMERICAN PRAIRIE

*An Afternoon Showcasing the Volunteers
of Thorn Creek Woods*

At our annual gathering Doug Taron of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum will explore the butterflies of Northeastern Illinois and highlight the local species found in urban prairies, wetlands and woodlands. Regional butterfly conservation will be discussed.

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods will showcase the very special Volunteers at the Nature Center and Preserve. Who are these Volunteers? What do they do? How can you help? Come find out!

Our annual gathering of nature lovers is open to the public, with a short Friends meeting, the presentation, refreshments, plus displays about our volunteers and their work.

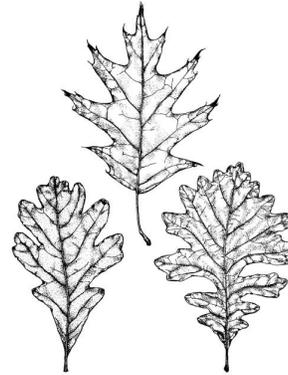
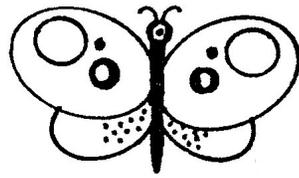


This presentation is sponsored by the Jim Marzuki Memorial Fund, established by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods to enhance our public programming.

Sunday, October 1, 1-3 p.m. Ages 12-adult.
Park Forest Village Hall, 350 Victory Drive
Registration required by Monday, September 25.

PRAIRIE SAMPLER AND TRAIL WORKDAY

Get down and dirty at our Thorn Creek workday. Help repair boardwalks, maintain trails, or weed and nurture our Prairie Sampler and butterfly gardens. Bring gloves, favorite tools and dress for the weather. **Sunday, October 22, 1-3 p.m. Ages 12 and older; children 15 or younger must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Monday, October 15.**



KNOW YOUR OAKS HIKE

Oak trees are common in Thorn Creek Woods, but are they all the same? Find out which oaks are found in our region and how to tell them apart even when the leaves are gone. Discover tips and tricks to help you identify some of the different species of oak trees. Sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, October 15, 1-3 p.m. Ages 18 and older Registration required by Monday, October 9.**

NOVEMBER

FAT, FUR, FOOD AND FLIGHT

Come explore how animals prepare for the cold weather and darker days. Participants will create a bird feeder, feel how fat insulates animals and look for clues of winter preparation on a hike in the preserve. This program for children is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, November 5, 10:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m. Free. All ages. Registration required by Monday, October 30.**

DRAWING OWLS

Calling all “artists” from beginners to advanced, and everyone in between. All ages are welcome. Have fun learning to draw a real-life owl - or - a cute, colorful owl, adding your own creative touches. Explore your unique skills with teaching artist Kim Watts-Rayon. It will be a hoot! All materials will be provided. **Sunday, November 12, 1-3 p.m. All ages. Children younger than age 6 must be accompanied by an adult. \$5 per person. Registration required by Monday, November 6.**



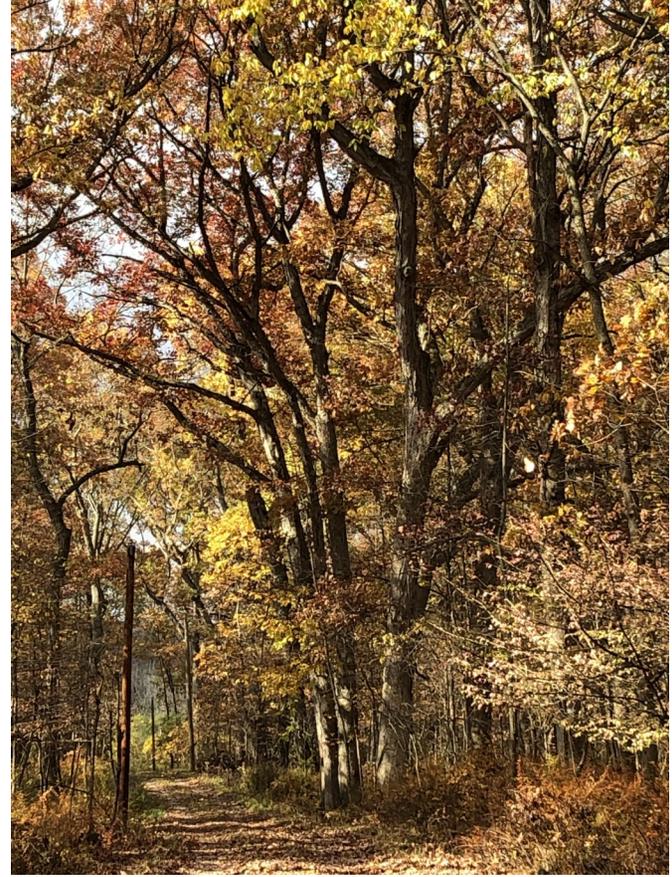
Thorn Creek Nature Center
247 Monee Road
Park Forest, IL 60466

Return Service Requested

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2
PARK FOREST IL
60466

If you no longer wish
to receive our
program brochure,
please call
708-747-6320
or email
thorn_creek@att.net

THORN CREEK WOODS NATURE PRESERVE



FALL-WINTER

September 2023 - February 2024

*The Nature Center and the Nature Preserve
depend on FRIENDS like YOU!*



FRIENDS volunteers support nature center staff in so many ways—staff the nature center on weekends, trail work, displays, leading hikes, special events, cleaning, pruning, artwork, research, and on and on. Join us!

**FRIENDS
OF THORN CREEK WOODS**

- donates funds for the purchase of equipment, supplies and displays for the nature center and preserve.
- operates the Capital Fund for improvements and the Marzuki Fund for programming
- sponsors an annual meeting as well as Earth Day.
- members receive a quarterly newsletter
- FRIENDS is the citizen activist group that preserved the Woods as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

So What Can You Do To Help?

*Four hours each month can make **all the difference***

Our nature Center is open to the public on Fridays, noon—4 p.m.

But **ONLY** with **YOUR** assistance.

Open Hours volunteers greet visitors and answer phones, plus they use their unique talents to do office or housekeeping tasks or set up displays — all to assist our Naturalists and keep the Nature Center open.

Call or email now to volunteer your time. We'll train you.

- Trail Watchers are our eyes & ears on the trails. Use the blue Trail Watchers forms or call/email nature center with concerns.
- Assist at programs and hikes.
- Trail workers, scouts, groups, individuals—Trail work of all kinds from monitoring trails to clipping, hauling, digging water bars, repairing and building boardwalks.
- Help prepare mailings and other clerical work.
- Become a member of Friends.

*Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—no corn)

*Suet cakes

*Picture Hanging Strips – Command brand, medium size, need lots!

*Cases of bottled water

*Hoes and loppers

*1" x 2 5/8" address labels- ink jet or laser

*Large plastic boxes with lids 1.5'x 3'

*Plastic shoe boxes with lids

*6" x 9" envelops

Join FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS

Annual Renewal Date is May 1st

___ Membership.\$20 ___Life Member.\$200 ___Organization & Business...\$50

___ I'd like to volunteer at Thorn Creek Nature Center, please call me.

___ I am donating \$_____ to the **Jim Marzuki Memorial Fund** - to make a difference in Thorn Creek public programming.

___ I am donating \$_____ to **Friends** general purposes.

___ I am donating \$_____ to the **Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund** for improvements in the Preserve & in the Nature Center building.

In memory of _____ In honor of _____

\$_____ **Total Enclosed**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

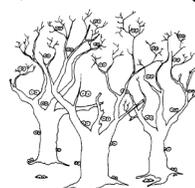
Telephone _____

E-mail _____

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS, Box 32, Richton Park, IL 60471

Get your Thorn Creek T-Shirts– Perfect Holiday Gifts

THORN CREEK WOODS



Serving area wildlife for 12,000 years

Long sleeve -
Forest Green with Mint
Design

Short sleeve -
Blue with White Design

Short Sleeve = \$ 10 + \$5
per shirt shipping/handling
Long Sleeve = \$15 + \$5 per
shirt shipping/handling

Please make your check to:
Thorn Creek Nature
Center, 247 Monee Road,
Park Forest, IL, 60466

Call 708-747-6320 or mail
or email
thorn_creek@att.net.
Or stop by nature center
Friday, Noon-4 p.m.

Thorn Creek Woods



"Serving area wildlife for 12,000 years"

Short sleeve -
Heather Maroon with
Crème Design
**NEW Long sleeve -
Maroon with Crème
Design**



The Perfect Gift

Inspired by
Thorn Creek Nature Center
Prairie Chapel
is an original
graphite drawing
by Marikay Peter Witlock

Intrigued by a promise of a patch of prairie, Witlock visited Thorn Creek Nature Center in the late summer of 1988. She left that visit with a vision of prairie and chapel woven as one, and a profound sense of the sacred in the land. *Prairie Chapel* became the first in a series of over 35 drawings combining architectural elements with the grasses and forbs of Illinois.

Available in limited edition of 300 signed and numbered prints
Image size 13" x 17", finished size 18" x 21"
Printed on acid free 80 lb. paper, the reproduction retains every detail of the original graphite drawing

Through the artist's generosity, this print is available with a donation to Friends of Thorn Creek Woods of \$75 or more.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to FRIENDS, over the value of the *Prairie Chapel* print (valued at \$75) are tax-deductible. Consult your tax advisor.

Donation - \$ _____
Shipping/Handling for a print - \$ 5.00
Total amount enclosed - \$ _____

Mail check made out to: Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
P.O. Box 32, Richton Park, IL 60471

Focus on our Trails

Contribute to our
Capital Fund
for vital improvements
on our trails and
our Nature Center building



Improvements

- * Parking lot improvements largely done by AmeriCorps 2022– BEING COMPLETED 2023
- * Kiosk sitting area repairs—COMPLETED 2022 BY AmeriCorps
- * Repairs to Nature Center exterior: entrance overhang & porch decking – COMPLETED 2022
- * 2 Boardwalks on Woodland Loop Trail – COMPLETED 2022 BY SCOUTS
- * Woodland Loop Trail - COMPLETED 2021
- * Small bridges & boardwalks—NEEDED

Capital Fund



Friends of Thorn Creek Woods established the CAPITAL FUND for improvements of the Nature Center building and in the Preserve itself over the years - vital projects for which there is no money in the preserve budget.



Acorn Donation up to \$249
Seedling Donation \$250-499
Sapling Donation \$500-999
Oak Tree Donation \$1000 +



Thank you to ALL who have contributed!

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